

# Cohasset Mariner

The Mariner (and supplements) is a paid circulation newspaper published every Thursday at 541 Plain St., Marshfield, Mass. 02050 for and about the residents of Cohasset. Telephone 383-6321 or 837-3500. Mailing address: Box 71, Cohasset, Mass. 02025. Branch office at 22 Elm St., Cohasset, Mass. 02025. Application to mail at second class rates pending at Marshfield, Mass. 02050.

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As The Mariner goes to press Tuesday night, all news and advertising copy must be received by Monday at 5 p.m. Classified advertising must be received by Monday at noon. Readers are invited to submit personal items, accounts of social functions, meetings, weddings and engagements. Photographs (black and white glossy) are also welcome.

Subscription rates: in-town \$8 for one year and \$14 for two years; out-of-town \$10 for one year and \$7 for nine months.

## Editorial

### Muddied Waters

It would be reassuring to declare the confusion over in the case of Patrolman Randolph Feola Jr.

Unfortunately, there is little evidence that any such reassurance is justified. With the release this week of police reports and executive session minutes on the Feola case, one might have assumed the mysteries of two weeks ago would now be solved. A naive assumption, hindsight tells us. The waters in the Feola case still run muddy.

For those of you who may have been abroad over the past two weeks, Patrolman Feola was suspended for five days by his father, Chief Randolph Feola, for using what was called poor judgement in a motor vehicle violation on the morning of Oct. 14. The details of that incident and the part involving Ptl. Feola are outlined in a report from Sgt. Richard Barrows that appears elsewhere in this week's Mariner.

Okay, so much for the preliminaries. Now it is time to move on to the questions...

1. It would not be hyperbole to suggest that Sgt. Barrow's report, outlining charges of a high speed chase, driving under the influence and driving the wrong way on a street, was most damaging to Ptl. Feola. Why then were no charges made, particularly when Sgt. Barrows was told by Chief Feola to lock up Ptl. Feola if he "was doing anything wrong?"

2. Since Sgt. Barrows made no charges, why were none forthcoming from the Chief? Why especially when, according to the Barrows report, he was at the scene on Elm Street where Ptl. Feola was reported driving on the wrong side of the street?

3. Why are there reports on the incident from Sgt. Barrows and others on duty at the time and none from the Chief? According to the Nov. 29 minutes of a Selectmen's executive session, Chief Feola agreed to issue a report of his own "that would show there was animosity toward both he and Officer Feola Jr. by certain members of the Police Dept.?"

4. What animosity?

5. The recorded minutes of the Nov. 29 executive session, though sketchy, were made available. The minutes of a Dec. 6 executive session on the same subject weren't made available because they don't exist. Why not? If the secretary had to leave, as has been explained, why weren't the minutes kept by one of the Selectmen?

6. Why was a hearing on the subject called by Selectmen then so abruptly canceled?

7. Why do so many unanswered questions lead to a whitewash of the entire affair?

The Feolas, along with other members of the Police Department, and Selectmen are annoyed with all the splashy attention this case has received. The public is annoyed as well but for quite different reasons, we suspect, and that brings us to this final observation.

Had all parties been more forthright from the start, this entire quackery could have been avoided. Ptl. Feola claims to have been maligned in print. He has, but that's in part because the entire affair developed so many tangled webs.

He should have been charged from day one and allowed to plead his case in court. Otherwise the case should have been dropped cold. If a suspension were merited, it should have been issued by Selectmen — the town's chief executives — and not by the accused's father.

This is all hindsight, of course, but it offers some solid lessons. And if it has to happen again, let it be handled without the bungling that marked this sorry business.

## Changes For Town Hall

By Gilbert Tower

Prior to about the year 1855 the Academy Building stood where the present Town Hall is now. The Town Hall has now existed for about 135 years. The academy was moved across the field to Beach St. where it was converted into a residence.

In the new building the Town Hall, for town meetings, was on the second floor, where it was reached by a broad flight of stairs from the lobby. In the first floor was the High School which succeeded the Academy.

The High School continued to occupy the first floor for about 43 years, until 1898 when the Osgood School was built.

The Cohasset Free Public Library then moved into the first floor where it continued for about 25 years, until the Paul Pratt Memorial Library Building was built. Cohasset was growing and Mr. Edward Stevens was employed to help the Selectmen as Town Accountant.

He had to have a room to work in near the Selectmen's Room, but the second floor was Town Hall. At the same time the Dramatic Club was very active. They induced the town to make the first floor an auditorium with a stage, a scenery space above the stage, dressing rooms below the stage and storage of scenery in the basement.

To make these building changes, George F. Newton, Cohasset architect, removed the second floor and put in a steel structure to support a new second floor. There are now steel trusses enclosed within the plaster partitions of the second floor, resulting in rooms for town officials. It would be impractical to remove those steel trusses and floor beams, so that the second floor will have to remain unchanged, about the way it is. It has been reported that Mr. DeCicco, State Building Inspector, mentioned that the town would get into no end of difficulty if it tried to make

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changes in the present building.

It has occurred to the writer that the situation is similar to addressmaker's job of making over an old dress. It can be successfully made over once, or twice, but after that the wisdom of making it over again has been used up. The time has come for a new dress, or a new building.

Our Town Hall building has now served the town well for about 135 years. No one could have expected it to do any better than that. Depreciation in value and obsolescence have been at work so that not much money value remains.

The Town Hall Building Committee in its report to the Selectmen missed the point of what it wanted to accomplish. It continues to use the second floor for town officials. Instead of that the intention was to move the town officials down to the ground level where they would be most accessible to elderly people and citizens wishing to confer with Selectmen, and to pay their taxes to the collector. What is contemplated now is a small one story building without basement to be located at the southeast side of the Town Hall Parking Lot.

It would provide a new room for the Selectmen and spaces adjoining for town accountants, Collector and Treasurer, Town Clerk, Assessors, Building Inspector and computer. They would be a team for the administration of town business. The rear wall could be temporary for future expansion.

It is proposed that the present Town Hall Building be continued unchanged. The rooms on the second floor will serve for town committees, including the Planning Board. It will do no harm to let the long stairways remain. Committee members have managed to climb them for years and

can continue to do so. The first floor can continue to be used for hearings and by the Dramatic Club.

Another saving can be made in the cost of the fire-proof vault for current town records. The Town Clerk needs considerable space for maps and plans. With automatic sprinklers the whole new building will be immune to fire. One room can provide more ample space than a vault.

The next thing needed from the architect is a layout plan for the new Selectmen's room and spaces for officials, the scale to be 1/2" or 3/4", also an estimate of cost for the new building. It is visualized that it could be something like the Cohasset Post Office, or the A & P and arranged something like the Cohasset Savings Bank. The cost would be moderate and it would not hurt the town. Valuation is increasing and will continue to increase. Let's build something new that the town will be proud of and will be an inspiration to town officials who will work in it. Few buildings will permit competitive bids. On the other hand, the cost of changing the present building would probably run up into a lot of money.

The proposed new building will not change the appearance of the common to any very noticeable degree. On the other hand it would probably be an improvement to the street because it would partly fill in a vacant space between the Town Hall building and the residence beyond the parking lot.

It could be colonial in style, consistent with the other buildings around the common. As one thinks further about the proposal the more sure one becomes that a new building will be the answer to the problem, letting the present Town Hall building continue unchanged to be used as previously mentioned.

## Around Town Hall

### PROJECTIONS WANTED

The Capital Budget Committee wants a description from Selectmen of capital outlay projects which would exceed \$5,000 over the next five years.

### DEFICIT ANTICIPATED

Town Accountant William Signorelli anticipated a deficiency of approximately \$5,000 through the end of the fiscal year in the Police Department overtime account.

### DECISION ANNOUNCED

A decision from the American Arbitration Association denied a grievance by Sgt. Richard Barrow of the Police Department concerning what he claimed to be the improper posting of a shift change within the force. Both the Police Association and the town will divide the Arbitrator's Bill of \$775.

### PLANS HEARD

Attorney David Sweeney in-



introduced John Pictour of Scituate to Selectmen to inform them of his client's plans to open a car rental business on Rte. 3A. Selectman Mary Jeanette Murray advised Pictour to consult the Board of Health concerning the property's septic system. Pictour indicated that he plans to apply for a special permit from the Board of Appeals to operate his business in the residentially-zoned area.

### PERMIT GRANTED

The Board of Appeals granted a special permit to Wayne and Jane Robbins of North Main Street for a 25-car parking facility at the Robbins' Garage. The permit was granted to eliminate congestion on their property. Wrecked and derelict vehicles will be removed from the premises.

### LICENSE DENIED

Selectmen voted against granting a used-car dealer's license at the Village Service Station on Depot Court. The license was denied because the adjacent lot to be used for parking the vehicles was deemed too small and because a used car business there violated zoning bylaws.

### REAPPOINTMENT

Selectmen have reappointed Nathaniel Bates as the representative from Cohasset to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council.